

SERMON

PREACHED

At St. Margarets VVestminster,
May 29. 1685.

Before the Honourable
HOUSE of COMMONS.

By William Sherlock; D. D. Master of the
TEMPLE,
And Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

DUBLIN,

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Most Excellent Majesty; And are to be sold by
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Sabbati 30 die Maii, 1685.

Ordered,

THat the Thanks of this House be given to Dr. Sherlock for his Excellent Sermon Yesterday, Preached before this House; And that he be desired by this House to Print the same; And that Mr. Dolben do present him with the Thanks, and acquaint him with the Desire of the House.

Paul Jodrel, Cler. Dom. Com.

10 ECCLES. 17.

Blessed art thou, O Land, when thy King is the
Son of Nobles.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like
them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and
our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord
hath done great things for them, 126 Ps. 1, 2. Which the Psalmist spoke
of the deliverance of the Jews from the Babilonish captivity; but is very
easily & naturally applied to the occasion of this present Solemnity. For
I hope we have not so soon forgot with what surprizing Joy we beheld
our banished Prince return again to his Throne, who brought back
with him our Laws, our Liberties, and our Religion; that is, brought
England into England again, which was banished with its Prince, with-
out changing its Place and Climate. And though that beloved and ad-
mired Prince, who gave the first lustre and glory to this day, now sleeps
with his Fathers, and has only left us the memory of his Princely Ver-
tues to adorn the Records of Time, and the Succession of English Kings
yet this day ought not to be forgot, which restored to us not only a
Mortal Prince, whom wee could not expect should live for ever, but the
Royal Family, which we hope and pray may be Immortal. Though
the Great *CHARLES* be dead, the King lives still in his Royal Bro-
ther, who was the Rightful Heir of his Crown, and the Partner of all
his Joys and Sorrows; who was banished with him, and who returned
with him, and augmented the brightness of this day by his united Beams
a Prince who equals the greatest Examples of former Kings, and, as we
have reason to hope, will leave a greater to those who follow.

It was not the Throngs and Crowds of People, which met their re-
turning Prince, nor those loud and joyful acclamations with which they
welcomed him to his Country and Throne; it was not the external Pomp

could make it ; nay, it was not merely the transporting sight of a prince who was now endeared by long absence, and by the Oppressions and Injuries of Usurpers, who after ten thousand Indignities returned with all the Expressions of a Princely Goodness and Indemnity : I say, though these were all very affecting Circumstances, and added much to raise and heighten a present Passion, yet they were not the true Glory of this day, which consisted in restoring the English Monarchy in the Royal Line, for this we bless God, and for the continuance of this we pray this day, and if we believe King Solomon, there is great reason for both for it is as great a Blessing as any Nation can enjoy : *Blessed art thou, O Land, when thy King is the Son of Nobles.*

The words are so plain, that I cannot think of any plainer to express their sense by ; and therefore not to loose time in a needless Explication, there are three things observable in them. 1. That Kingly Government is a great Blessing : for it cannot be a blessing to have our King the Son of Nobles, if it be not a Blessing to have a King. 2. That the noble Decent and Extraction of a King is a great Blessing to a Nation as my Text expressly says, *Blessed art thou, O Land, &c.* And the natural inference from this is, 3. That an Hereditary Monarchy is a great Blessing : for we are secure, that our Kings are the Sons of Nobles, when the Son inherits the Fathers Crown.

1. That Kingly Government is a great Blessing. As for that dispute, Whether Kingly Government be by *Divine Right* ; if by *Divine Right*, we mean a positive Law and Institution of God, that all Nations shall be governed by Kings, I finde no such thing in Scripture, which is the only Revelation of the Divine Will ; but if by *Divine Right*, we mean only such an intimation of the will of God, as we can learn from the appearances of nature and providence, I dare boldly affirm, that Kingly government is by *Divine Right* ; that is, is most agreeable to all those notices we have of the Will of God from the original frame and constitution of Nature, and from the dispensations of providence ; which though it be not sufficient to condemn all other Governments as unlawful, yet it advances Monarchy above all other Forms of Government, when it appears, that God himself has at least given the preference to it.

The History of the Creation is a plain proof of this ; for God made but one Man, to whom he gave the Dominion and Empire of the World, who was the natural Lord as well as Father of all his posterity ; which

creating but one Man and one Woman is against Divorce; which yet is our Saviours Argument, 10 *Mark* 7, 8, 9.

Thus it was at the new peopling of the World after the Flood; God set but one Independent Head of a Family, *Noah*, who had a Paternal and Regal Authority over his Sons and their Posterity: So that Mankind were born under a Monarchical Government, which therefore is the first and the most natural Government; instituted by God by the very Laws of our Creation; for when God made but one man, who by the Law of Nature has a right to govern his own Children, (who then were all Mankind) he made him a natural Monarch.

We have no Histories of those Times to acquaint us how the Government descended; but we have all the reason in the World to believe, that as *Adam* and *Noah* govern'd by a Paternal Right, so when Mankind increased, and grew too numerous to dwell together, they were formed into distinct Kingdoms, under the Government of the Heads and Princes of their several Families; for in those days they knew no other right of Government but what was Natural and Paternal.

I urge this only to prove that Monarchy is the original form of Government instituted by God himself; not that every Monarch must have the same Right to Government which *Adam* and *Noah* had; for when there is no Prince in the World can make good his Title to the Crown: But these are very distinct questions, what is that form of Government which God appointed? and by what Right a particular Prince can challenge this Authority? In the first Ages of the World, while the lineal descent of Families was known, there could be no dispute about the Succession; but when the numbers of men increased, and Families were divided and sub-divided, and intermixt with each other, when these little Independent Princes invaded their Neighbours, and enlarged their Dominions by force and power, the right of Government altered, but the form of Government was the same still. And though a Prince now governs not by a Paternal Right as *Adam* and *Noah* did, but by the Election of the People, or by the Right of Conquest, or by a Succession from ancient Kings, who have been long possessors of the Throne, the Monarchy is the same, though the claim to Sovereign Power varies. God's original institution of Monarchy in a Paternal Government justifies the Form, whatever dispute there may be about the Right of Succession.

And therefore we find, when this original Title of Paternal Authority failed either by force and usurpation, or for want of knowing the true Heir, yet Monarchy continued, and all the World was governed by Kings, and knew no other Government till Greece and Rome set the example, who changed the Regal Power into Aristocracies and Commonwealths.

And to satisfy us, that God still approved of Kingly Government, even after the distinction made between Paternal and Regal Authority, we may observe, that by a positive institution God erected a Monarchy, but never set up a Commonwealth. The Jewish Government was properly a Theocracy, God was their King in a more peculiar manner than he was the King of other Nations: he dwelt among them in the Tabernacle or Temple, gave them a body of Laws, appointed Officers under him to administer the Affairs of his Kingdom, and in all emergent difficulties gave immediate Orders and Directions what to do; but yet he appointed a single person to be his Vice-Roy, and invested him with the Sovereign Power. Thus *Moses* while he lived was King of *Jeshurun*, and after him *Joshua*, and the Judges succeeded him, whom God raised up in an extraordinary manner, as occasion required, to fight their Battels, and to rescue them out the hands of their Enemies; and when there was no extraordinary Judge, the High Priest was their ordinary Ruler, who governed with a Sovereign Authority. And when in time they grew weary of this, and affected the external pomp and splendor of a Court, and a visible Sovereign Prince like their Neighbour Nations; though God was angry with them for rejecting his Government, yet he himself chose them a King; and after *Saul*, invested *David* with the Regal Power, and entailed it on his Family. All this was done by the immediate order and appointment of God, which cannot be said of any other form of Government. Aristocracies and Democracies were a defection from Regal Power occasioned by the ill Government of Princes, or by the giddiness and licentious humour of the people, who are fond of Liberty, Power, and Innovations: But though God by his Providence permitted such changes of Government, he never by a visible Authority and Direction formed and modelled a Commonwealth as he did the Jewish Monarchy.

But whatever be determined as to the original of Monarchy, that which I am at present concerned for, are the advantages of it, That it

Supposing our Prince to be Wise and Vertuous, there can be no competition between the Government of one and of many. Sovereign Power in one hand lies more ready for Action, because it has but one Will, and needs not number votes, nor wait the consent of different Inclinations, and Interests, which many times lets slip the proper seasons of Action, and defeats the best Designs.

A Sovereign Prince may have what advice he pleases, and follow what he thinks best without delay; he may have a multitude of Counsellors without danger of Faction, while he judges for himself. But in popular Governments, where there is no one Sovereign Will and Reason, but all have equal Authority, how unequal soever their skill and their honesty be, when Power is thus parcelled out into several hands, it is usually divided against it self too, and grows weak by intestine Factions.

Though there is great safety in a multitude of Counsellors, when there is one Commanding and Sovereign Will, yet there is no great likelihood of Agreement between a multitude of petty Sovereigns, where every man has an equal power, and every man judges his own reason the best, or at least as good as his Neighbours. This is just as if the same Body should be animated by several Souls, which have each of them distinct Wills and Appetites, and do not always consent to the same thing.

There is not a greater plague to humane Societies than State-factions, and it is hardly possible that a popular Government could be freed from them. The ambition of some, the jealousies and Emulations of others, private Quarrels, or private Interests, Perfidiousness, and Treachery, or an affection of Popularity, some or all of which are the Natural and almost necessary effects of a popular Government, are the very seeds of Faction and Sedition, and though the major vote determines all, yet the Quarrel does not end there, especially if the prevailing Councils want success. The people must be made Judges of what the Senators do, and the Nation is presently divided into as many parties and Factions as the Senate is. The Roman Commonwealth it self, though the most flourishing that we read of in ancient Story, has too many examples of this, witness *Marius* and *Sylla*, *Cæsar* and *Pompey*. There is seldom any peace and order long pre-

served in such Governments, but when some one or a few great men have got the Ascendant, and by their Interest and Authority give Laws to all the rest; that is, where there is a kind of Regal Power under the name and appearance of a Commonwealth.

As for the Publick Good, I cannot but think it more secure in one hand than in many. A Sovereign prince is the Father of his Country, and can reasonably have no distinct interest from the Publick for his Kingdom is his Inheritance, and his Glory and power consist in the happy and flourishing State of his people. When his Kingdom is well govern'd, his Subjects pleas'd and easie, this makes him beloved at home, and feared abroad. The Glory is intirely his own, as the Shame and Dishonour of a Misgovernment is; which are very powerful passions in great Minds, but lose their effect in popular Governments where the Glory and the Shame is divided among so many, that it is despised by all.

We may expect a more impartial administration of Justice from a Sovereign Prince, who is equally concerned in all his Subjects, than when the power is divided among a great many, who have their several Friends, Relations, and dependants to serve, and whose Fortune does not set them above the Temptations of Bribery and Injustice. There is more apparent danger of Oppression, when there are so many to raise their Fortunes by the Government, who have private Interests and Designs, and must be paid well for their publick Service: Whereas no Prince ought to think himself poor, while his Subjects are rich; and nothing can reasonably tempt an Hereditary Monarch to drain his Subjects to fill his own Exchequer, but their Factious or Sparing Humour; then indeed it concerns a Prince to get and to keep Money by him, when he finds so much occasion for it, and fees it so hard to come by. But this is the fault of the Subject, not of the Prince: for were Subjects dutiful and obedient, quiet and peaceable, and ready at all times to grant Supplies, as the support of the Government needed, without difficulty or dishonourable terms; He must be a strange Prince who would oppress his Subjects, when he knows he may have what he can reasonably desire, without oppression; when his Subjects pockets are as open, and a more increasing Exchequer than his own:

But the most fatal Cheat in popular Governments, is the name of Liberty, though the Power be as absolute and despotical, as can be exercised by any Prince; and the only pretence of Liberty is this, that they are Slaves to their Equals, and enslave one another by turns: But I shall say nothing to this, since our late dear-bought Experience has taught us the difference between the new modelled Government of our fellow Subjects, and of a natural Prince.

So that though we can have no Mathematical certainty in these cases, yet all the fair appearances of Reason give the advantages for a happy Government on the side of Monarchy; the only danger is, if our Prince should happen to prove a Tyrant, and then he may do almost as much mischief as a Tyrannical Commonwealth: for it is probable, that five hundred Tyrants would do more mischief than one. But that which may equally happen under all Forms of Government, is an Argument against none. The Divine Providence will rectifie such Miscarriages, as cannot be prevented by any humane care. And yet this, which is the only possible Objection against Monarchy, is in a great measure prevented by the Noble Extraction, and the generous Education of Princes; which is the second thing observable in my Text.

2. That the Noble Descent and extraction of a King, is a great Blessing to a Nation. *Blessed art thou O Land, When thy King is the Son of Nobles.* And there are two things, wherein this Blessedness consists.

1. That the Sons of Nobles are usually better qualified for government than mean Persons.

2. That Nobility of Birth gives Lustre and Authority to their Government.

1. That the Sons of Nobles (especially the Sons of Kings, not to meddle at present with other Nobles) are usually better qualified for Government than meaner Persons: I say usually; for in Moral Causes, and Free Agents there can be no Rule without exception. Persons nobly descended may degenerate from the Vertues of their Ancestors, and men of mean Birth and Fortune may have great and generous Minds, as if they had been made for Rule and Empire: but usually the fortune of mens Birth and Education fashions their Minds, and fits them for a peculiar state of life, above or below which they are out of their natural

Sphere, and cannot observe a just Decorum in acting a part, which does not properly belong to them.

There are some Princely Vertues, which are necessary to a Happy Government, which cannot be easily learnt by mean Persons; A certain inbred Greatness and Generosity of Mind, a Sense of Honour without Pride or Insolence, a Love of Justice without Cruelty or Revenge, a just Esteem for Riches without Covetousness, a natural Care of the publick Good, and a delight and pleasure in generous actions, a steadiness of mind, which does not grow giddy with its own height, courage and boldness in danger, prudence in Council, dexterity in Business, and a peculiar art and skill in knowing, and governing men. These are God-like dispositions of Mind, which (in that perfection, which is necessary to Government) seem to be originally owing to Nature, though they may be cultivated by the happy circumstances of a Noble Birth and Education.

It has been often observed both of Men and Beasts, That they beget their like, not only as to their Kind and Species, but as to their peculiar Qualities and natural Vertues. A Child very often resembles his Father as much in the natural endowments and perfections of Mind, as in external shape, which is so certainly true, (whatever the Philosophy of it be) That upon this account, the Sons of Nobles have the advantage of meaner Births. A great and generous Prince begets Princes qualified to sway the Scepter, and born with a kind of natural instinct of Government.

And besides this, the glory of their Birth does early inspire them with great Thoughts, and they are trained up betimes in the Arts of Government. Those universal Courtships and Addresses they receive, teach them greatness of Mind, mixt with affability, and a decent respect to Inferiors; for those who have been always accustomed to be treated with Ceremony and awful Regards, have a due sense of Honour, but are not proud. For Honour seldom swells mens minds, but when it is new. A plentiful Fortune, to which they are born without their care and industry, is the best preservative against Covetousness, which is an ignoble Vice, and seldom possesses any Man, but him who has known, what it is to want, and what it is to get an estate.

And those who stand almost upon an even Level with the Throne (as the Sons of Kings do) have so easy an ascent thither, That it does

not turn their Heads with an unusual height, which is the Common Effect, that a great and sudden advancement has upon mean men, that they forget themselves and their just Respects to Mankind, which makes them proud and insolent Tyrants when they are posses of Sovereign Power, which shows us, what a happiness it is to live under the Government of a Prince, who is Nobly descended; for such Persons, whatever other faults they may have; have such Royal Virtues, as justify them for excellent Governours.

2. Nobility of Birth gives a Lustre and Authority to such a Prince's Government. Men do not love to submit to their Equals or Inferiors; when such ascend the Throne, they are despised and envied, and nothing but Force and Power can keep them there. But a High-born Prince is the pride and the desire of a Nation: he inherits the Glory of his Ancestors; and the World prefigures great things of him, who descends from a race of Kings; no man thinks much to submit to him, who was born to govern, but those, who are impatient of any Government, or ambitious of Government themselves. We are contented to yield to him, whose Glory we cannot rival, for Competition is only among equals; and since the Government must be in some hand, it is most reasonable to consent in him, who by Birth and Fortune is advanced above all; and that must make any Government happy, which makes Subjects willing to obey; and nothing can so universally dispose people to a chearfull Obedience as this.

3. And this shows us the advantages of an Hereditary Monarchy. For the Royal Family is certainly the most Noble: a King, who is the Son of Kings, to be sure is the Son of Nobles. And it is the highest and greatest Nobility of which Solomon speaks; to be sure, what he says must be eminently true of the most Noble Blood. A King's Son, especially if he descend from an Ancient race of Kings, has as much the advantage of Inferiour Nobles, as they have of the Gentry, or the Gentry of meaner People. It is Royal Blood, which inspires a Princely Mind, which is more Noble still the further it is removed from its Original.

I cannot now discourse to you concerning the Right of Succession; it seems most Natural for a Son to be Heir to his Father, and therefore to succeed to the Crown of which he dyed possessor. for Power descends as well as an Estate, as the Government of the Family was the Birth-right of the eldest Son, as his Father's Heir. But however that be, if it

be so great a Happiness to a Nation to have a King the Son of Nobles, there is no such way to secure this as by a Succession of Kings of the same Royal Stock and Family, whose Glory and Nobility increases with every Succession, and gives a new Greatness and Authority to its Government.

But to hasten to a conclusion, the proper use of this discourse consists of two parts. 1. To bless God for the Mercy of this day. 2. To be Loyal to our King.

1. To bless God for the Mercy of this Day. It would be too melancholy a Thought at this time to reflect on the sad face of things in these Kingdoms, when an Excellent Prince was murdered by his own Subjects; the Natural Heir of the Crown, and the whole Royal Family forced into Banishment; the Ancient and Loyal Nobility and Gentry under Imprisonments and Sequestrations; the Church of *England* robbed of its Bishops and Clergy, its Worship and Revenues, while some mean and ignoble persons trampled upon Crowns and Mitres, enriched themselves with the spoils of Church and State, usurped the Royal Power, but governed like Slaves. But this blessed Day put an end to all these Miseries and confusions; God by a wonderful Providence restored to us our King and Royal Family in Peace and Triumph, without the noise and alarms of War, without drawing the Sword, or shedding English Blood. He was driven out by Victorious Rebels, at the expence of a vast Treasure, and more Blood; but was invited home again by a wearied and distracted People, who now felt the difference between the Government of mean Usurpers, and of a natural and High-born Prince.

And thus the Nation recovered its ancient Glory, and every Subject their Just Rights; and which is more valuable than all Civil Rights, the free Profession and Exercise of their Religion, according to the Doctrine and Worship of the Apostolick Church of *England*, though some possibly may think it too late to glory in this now; and it would be too late indeed, and would lessen the Glory of this day, were the most Holy Religion of the Church of *England* in any danger. But next to having our King of the Communion of the Church of *England*, we can desire no more, than to have a King, who will defend it; which I am sure the *Protestant* *Christians* would have thought a great Blessing; and therefore this is a joyful day still, which brought back one Prince to restore the Church of *England*, and another to protect it; for so far be it from me, and from

Loyal Subjects to distrust those solemn and repeated assurances, which our King has given us of this Matter. A Prince, whose Mind is as Great and Noble as his Birth, who abhors all mean Arts and Equivocal Reserves, and scorns either to dissemble what he believes himself, or to speak what he does not think.

2. As for Loyalty, were it decent to conclude a discourse of Kingly Government without an Exhortation to Loyalty and Obedience, it might be very well spared at this time, in such a presence, whose Example preaches Loyalty to the whole Nation. And therefore I shall not run over all the Topicks of Obedience, but only urge some few things, which are proper to this argument, and to this present solemnity.

It is a great Happiness to a Nation to have a King, who is the Son of Nobles. This Happiness we at this day enjoy; we live under the Government of a King, who has Royal Blood in his Veins, and discovers a Great and Princely Mind in all his Actions, and this secures us of as much happiness as we can expect under any Government; but it is not merely the wise Conduct of a Prince, but the governable temper of Subjects too, which is necessary to make a Nation happy. No Government neither of God nor Men can make those happy, who will not be governed. Discontents and Jealousies, and Seditions turn the Court into a Camp, and exchange the Civil Government for Military Force and Power; and the best Prince in the World can never Govern to so great advantage, who is forced to govern by the Sword. But when Subjects love and reverence their King, and always believe well of him; when they obey his Laws, and comply with all reasonable Intimations of his will, that is, when they may be governed like Subjects, not like Slaves, then a King has a fair occasion to exercise all the Princely Vertues and peaceful arts of government, to make his Reign prosperous, and his Subjects happy. I know no Prince in any age, under whom an Obedient and Governable People might have lived more happily, than our late Martyred Sovereign; and yet, what miseries and confusions did a Faction and Turbulent Zeal create, which ended in as doleful a Tragedy as ever the Sun saw; and when we remember these times, & consider how little a Nation sins by Seditions & Rebellions, unless men love Rebellion for Rebellions sake, there can be no great temptation in it though it were no sin.

Nay we may observe, that as an ungovernable temper will disturb the best and wisest Governments; so Loyalty and Obedience is a power-

ful Obligation on Princes to rule well; for Princes must value Obedience and Subjection as they do their Crowns. To this we owe the present security and Protection of the Church of *England*; for if there were nothing else to be liked in it, yet a generous Prince cannot but like and reward its Loyalty; and it would seem very harsh for any Prince to desire that Religion should be turned out of the Church, which secures him in a quiet possession of his Throne.

And therefore to conclude, I would desire you to observe, that it is a Church of *England* Loyalty I perswade you to: This our King approves, commends, relies on, as a tried and experienced Loyalty, which has suffered with its Prince, but never yet rebelled against him: a Loyalty upon firm and steady Principles, and without reserve. And therefore to keep us true to our Prince, we must be true to our Church and to our Religion. It is no Act of Loyalty to accommodate or complement away our Religion and its legal Securities; for if we change our Religion, we must change the Principles of our Loyalty too, and I am sure the King and the Crown will gain nothing by that; for there is no such lasting and immoveable Loyalty, as that of the Church of *England*. I deny not, but some, who are Papists, in some Junctures of Affairs may and have been very Loyal; but I am sure the Popish Religion is not; the English man may be Loyal, but not the Papist; and yet there can be no security of those mens Loyalty, whose Religion in any case teaches them to rebel.

God grant the whole Nation may follow the Example of his Honourable Senate, to be Loyal to their Prince, Zealous for the Service of the Crown, and true to the Religion of the Church of *England*, as dearer to them than their Lives.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one Eternal God, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever.
Amen.

FINIS.

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$$28 \quad 10 \quad 2$$

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unwarranted ~~scribbles~~ #

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